United Nations A/C.5/67/SR.15

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General
31 January 2013

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 November 2012, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Berger ..... (Germany)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kelapile

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 135: Human resources management
(A/66/327 and Add.1 and A/67/99 and Corr.1, 136 and Add.1, 171 and Corr.1, 306, 324 and Add.1, 329 and Add.1, 337 and Add.1 and 545)

1. **Mr. Takasu** (Under-Secretary General for Management), introducing the various reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management, said that the Secretary-General had submitted an overview of human resources management reform with one addendum (A/67/324 and Add.1). The overview report covered the entire range of reforms that had been endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/250 and 65/247, including contractual arrangements; performance management and the e performance tool; management and leadership development; talent management and the talent-management tool, Inspira; and the young professionals programme.

2. Addendum 1 set out the Secretary-General's proposed framework for mobility and career development of internationally recruited staff in the United Nations Secretariat. The Secretary-General's goal was to build on the foundations already in place to deliver a more structured approach to mobility. However, the system of movements was currently ad hoc and depended solely on the selection of staff by individual hiring managers. Neither the Organization nor staff themselves benefited systematically from the opportunities that mobility should afford. It was therefore imperative to establish a framework for mobility that would enable the Organization to deploy a truly global, dynamic and adaptable workforce that could effectively respond to evolving operational needs.

3. Hardship duty stations continued to experience high vacancy rates, while staff serving at such locations remained there far too long. It was incumbent on the Organization to promote a more equitable sharing of the burden of service in difficult duty stations, and that could not be achieved without a new mobility policy.

4. The proposed mobility framework was based on the principle that, with few exceptions, all internationally recruited staff should move at regular intervals. A position change could involve one or a combination of the following: a change of role, a change of function, a change of department or a change of duty station. Internationally recruited staff would belong to one of a number of job networks, each of which would consist of a grouping of job families with closely linked mandates or programmes of work and that required similar skill sets. Responsibility for recommending selection and reassignment of staff would shift from hiring managers to job network boards. Recommendations at the D-1 and D-2 levels would be made by a single senior review board composed of Under-Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries General.

5. Under the proposed system, staff members would be responsible for initiating moves and would be expected to apply for posts prior to reaching the maximum position occupancy limit, which ranged from three to seven years, depending on the hardship classification of the duty station. A limited number of positions would be considered non-rotational and staff occupying such positions would not be subject to the mobility framework. Given that senior staff were expected to have broad experience in the Organization, a staff member would need at least one prior geographical move of one year or more to be eligible to progress to positions at the P-5, D-1 and D-2 levels.

6. With regard to the impact of the proposed framework on external recruitment, he noted that external candidates would be considered for a post only if there were no suitable internal candidates. External candidates, however, would continue to have opportunities to join the Organization as a result of staff separating, retiring or leaving, and they would continue to be recruited through the young professionals programme and at the senior levels. Non-rotational posts would also be open to external candidates with the requisite expertise.

7. There were costs associated with geographical mobility. However, even under the current ad hoc system, mobility-related expenditures were included under common staff costs. It was not anticipated that there would be a sudden increase in geographical moves and therefore costs. The phased implementation of the new framework by job network would enable the Organization to monitor and manage any increase in expenditures as each job network became operational beginning in 2015.

8. The proposed framework would require significant changes to current procedures, and much

preparatory work would be required in order to set up the new system. Management would continue to consult with staff throughout the preparatory process and report regularly to the General Assembly on progress made. Given that many elements of the system could not be developed until Member States had endorsed the proposed framework, the General Assembly was requested to approve the proposed mobility and career development framework set out in the Secretary-General's report.

9. The Secretary-General had also submitted a report on the composition of the Secretariat with a single addendum (A/67/329 and Add.1). The report focused on staff demographics, while the Addendum covered gratis personnel, retired staff, and consultants and individual contractors. The report of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/67/171 and Corr.1) provided information on all actions taken in cases of established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and the disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal action, taken in accordance with the established procedures and regulations, along with a broad overview of the administrative machinery in disciplinary matters. The Secretary-General's report on amendments to the Staff Rules (A/67/99 and Corr.1) contained the full text of new rules and amendments to existing rules that the Secretary-General proposed to implement as of 1 January 2013.

10. Lastly, he said that the Secretariat would not be able to submit a proposal for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges, as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 65/247, until Member States provided clearer guidance on the range of staff members to be covered by the review. Once that guidance had been received, the Secretariat would formulate a revised approach as a matter of priority for the Assembly's consideration at its sixty-eighth session.

11. **Ms. Dubinsky** (Director, Ethics Office), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/67/306), said that, during the reporting period, the Ethics Office had received 877 requests for its services. That figure represented an increase compared to the 766 requests it had received in the prior reporting period and could be attributed to the continuing importance of the Office as a secure and confidential resource for staff on matters related to ethics, values and organizational culture.

12. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office had continued to enhance its outreach, communication and education activities, and its staff had visited several field missions, including peacekeeping and special political missions. The Office had also strengthened its training programmes, launched a new public website and revised and expanded the United Nations ethics guide.

13. The Ethics Office had identified shortcomings in the United Nations policy on protection against retaliation, which was set out in ST/SGB/2005/21. In order to make the policy more robust and effective, the Office was conducting a comprehensive review of the existing policy, with a view to enhancing how the Organization encouraged the reporting of serious misconduct, protected whistleblowers from retaliation and intervened to prevent retaliation.

14. With regard to the Organization's financial disclosure programme, she said that, in the 2011 filing cycle, some 99.9 per cent of the staff members who had participated in the programme had complied with their filing obligations, representing the highest compliance level in the programme's history. In response to General Assembly resolution 66/234, the Secretariat had initiated a review of the regulatory framework of the financial disclosure programme and had taken measures to address and mitigate personal conflicts of interest. Such measures included providing information and guidance on managing conflicts of interest to staff during orientation and regular mandatory ethics workshops, as well as other training and briefing sessions.

15. **Mr. Kelapile** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on human resources management (A/67/545), said that, although the Advisory Committee believed that a better managed organizational mobility programme could contribute to improving the delivery of mandates and respond better to the career aspirations of staff, it could not recommend approval by the General Assembly of the proposed mobility and career development framework in its current form The Advisory Committee was not convinced that the proposed framework fully addressed the problems it sought to resolve or that it would yield all the benefits identified by the Secretary-General. In addition, the Secretary-General's proposal were not sufficiently detailed. Accordingly, in its report, the Advisory

Committee highlighted the elements of the proposal that required further clarification, development and adjustment.

16. Bearing in mind the intention of the Secretary-General to begin implementation of the proposed framework on 1 January 2015, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit to it, for its consideration, as soon as possible and no later than at the main part of the sixty-eighth session, a comprehensive report on the proposed mobility and career development framework that addressed the issues raised by the Advisory Committee, including the need for more information and analysis to justify the move beyond a purely voluntary system towards a managed system of mobility.

17. That recommendation notwithstanding, the Advisory Committee was of the view that there was an urgent need to ensure a more equitable sharing of the burden of service in hardship duty stations, and that taking measures to ameliorate the situation was not contingent on the approval by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's proposals. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General, when making selection decisions, to give, with immediate effect, priority among internal candidates to staff who had served in hardship duty stations for long periods of time without being able to move, and to propose subsequently any additional measures he deemed necessary to address that situation.

18. With regard to the Secretary-General's overview of human resources management reform, he said that, while the Advisory Committee recognized the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to address the issues raised by the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/250 and 65/247, much remained to be done. For example, with regard to staff selection and recruitment, the Advisory Committee was concerned that the 120-day target for filling a post had still not been reached. Any meaningful reduction in the time taken to recruit a candidate would only be achieved if the causes of those delays, particularly at the "recommendation of candidate" stage, were addressed and those responsible held accountable. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to investigate the reasons for delays at each stage of the recruitment process and to propose appropriate measures to address the issues identified.

19. The Advisory Committee noted the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to develop and implement measures to strengthen the performance appraisal system, and welcomed, in particular, the development of a rewards and recognition framework. However, it was concerned about the shortcomings identified in the current system of sanctions for underperformance and recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take, as a matter of priority, all necessary steps to address those shortcomings.

20. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the General Assembly should confirm the Secretary-General's understanding that placement of successful candidates from the young professionals programme should be made at the P-1 or P-2 level, depending on whether candidates' qualifications satisfied the requirements of the relevant job description and on the availability of posts. It also had no objections to the Secretary-General's proposal that the Assembly endorse the amendments to the learning and development component of the young professionals programme, or to the proposed continuation of the "G to N" arrangement. The Secretary-General's efforts to optimize the size of the national competitive recruitment examination roster were also appreciated.

21. Although the Secretary-General had made efforts to reach out to potential employees from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, the Advisory Committee was of the view that those efforts had been ineffective. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve geographical representation, based on an in-depth analysis of the real causes of the current imbalances. The Secretary-General should submit substantive proposals to the Assembly in his next report on human resources management.

22. With regard to the system of desirable ranges, the Advisory Committee regretted that the Secretary-General had failed, on successive occasions, to respond appropriately to the request of the General Assembly that he present proposals for a comprehensive review of the system. The Advisory Committee believed that the requests contained in Assembly resolutions 63/250 and 65/247 provided sufficient guidance as to the

issues that should be addressed by such proposals, and therefore expected that the relevant proposals would be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than at the sixty-eighth session.

23. The Advisory Committee remained concerned that, although some progress had been made in respect of increasing the number of posts subject to the system of desirable ranges that were encumbered by staff having geographical status, a large number of such posts were not encumbered by those staff. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take substantive measures to address that issue.

24. The issue of liabilities from administrative service arrangements was a matter of serious concern that required immediate attention, particularly in view of the February 2012 decision of the International Court of Justice affirming the financial liability of an administering entity for administrative decisions taken in respect of staff members of an employing entity. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to work with the entities concerned in order to amend all administrative service arrangements to ensure that the Secretariat, as the administering entity, could not be held financially liable for administrative decisions taken by employing entities.

25. Turning to the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat, he said that, while the Advisory Committee welcomed the inclusion of commentary on demographic trends affecting the Secretariat, it believed that the Secretary-General could go further in his analysis by, for example, identifying the reasons for particular patterns, especially those emerging since the issuance of the previous composition report.

26. The Advisory Committee was dissatisfied with the format of the Secretary-General's report on amendments to the Staff Rules. It recommended that, in future, proposed amendments to rules and regulations, including the Staff Rules, be presented in such a way as to allow readers to compare them to the existing text, with both deletions and additions highlighted for ease of reference. In addition, with particular reference to the amendment to rule 4.12 on temporary appointments, the Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of ensuring that the rules and regulations of the Organization accurately reflected the language used in relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

27. As for the financial disclosure programme, the Advisory Committee commended the Ethics Office for its efforts to ensure full compliance with the requirements of that programme and trusted that the Secretary-General would continue to encourage senior officials to participate in the voluntary public disclosure initiative. With regard to the Ethics Office's ongoing efforts to better determine the filing population based on the risk profile of the Organization, the Advisory Committee pointed out that any expansion of the filing population might have financial implications.

28. **Mr. Biraud** (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of the Medical Service in the United Nations system (A/66/327), said that the objective of the review had been to assess the manner in which medical services were provided, managed, supported and monitored in the United Nations system, with a view to proposing improvements that would enable the Organization to fulfil its duty of care for the health and safety of staff. That duty was of particular importance given the Organization's strategic decision to strive for greater staff mobility and to increase its field presence, and was of particular relevance to staff deployed at hardship duty stations.

29. Staff members were increasingly being deployed to field duty stations, many of which were located in areas where the health-care infrastructure, including that of the United Nations, was of less than the highest standard of quality. Accordingly, it was vital that the management and accountability framework of the Organization's clinics and dispensaries should be set out in clearly defined terms of reference, taking into account the inter-agency services those clinics and dispensaries were required to deliver. Although the Medical Services Division was nominally responsible for field medical services, it had no input with regard to the budgets and workplans of the field units, nor was it able to manage the performance of other service providers. The Organization should therefore devote due attention to improving the coordination of system-wide medical services.

30. Headquarters duty stations generally had the resources required to provide adequate medical

services. Nonetheless, several United Nations system organizations had indicated that there were insufficient resources for, inter alia, hiring additional medical service staff, improving service delivery, training medical service personnel, supporting health promotion programmes, creating databases, performing statistical analysis of work and responding to emergencies.

31. Although the United Nations had invested considerable resources in employing a large number of health-care personnel across the system, it had not yet created the structures required to oversee and manage those resources according to modern health-care standards. Recalling that the proposal of the United Nations Medical Directors Working Group for the adoption of an occupational safety and health policy had been endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), he said that the Unit recommended the creation of a system-wide network for coordinating occupational safety and health policy issues. Such a network, which should be modelled on the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, would monitor United Nations occupational safety and health policies, practices and procedures, and support the High-level Committee on Management in its review of the issues that pertained to the broader United Nations occupational safety and health structure.

32. Introducing the report on staff-management relations within the United Nations (A/67/136), he said that the review had been conducted in response to requests from both management and staff representatives. Rather than focusing on policies, the report examined how power was organized and shared between individuals and groups whose immediate interests might differ, but who wished to serve the Organization to the best of their ability.

33. In view of the striking diversity in staff-management relations within the United Nations system and the lack of an umbrella association that brought together the various staff representative bodies, it had been decided that the current report, which covered the period 2009-2011, would be confined to staff-management relations at the United Nations Secretariat. Another report covering staff-management relations at the specialized agencies would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. In accordance with article 11 of the Statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, no comment had been sought from CEB in connection with the current report because it focused on a single organization.

34. Although the Unit had found that the quality of staff-management relations varied widely, the experience of the United Nations Children's Fund had shown that excellent relations were possible under the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules when a climate of trust prevailed. The inspectors had also analysed 30 years of reports of the former Staff-Management Coordination Committee, as well as the Organization's basic texts on staff-management relations, and made a number of suggestions to improve efficiency, based on best practices. Those recommendations were primarily aimed at the Staff-Management Committee and had been briefly discussed at its last session in June 2012; staff representatives had welcomed the report's recommendations and conclusions, while management representatives had been of the view that the issues raised seemed to be more complex than could be addressed by the Secretariat internally. As the terms of reference of the Staff-Management Committee called for it to agree upon and present a position to the General Assembly on issues outside the authority of the Secretary-General, the Assembly might be interested to learn what position the Staff-Management Committee had taken with regard to the report's six recommendations.

35. He briefly outlined each of the report's chapters and its recommendations, including recommendation 5, which called for a new staff regulation to be submitted to the General Assembly recognizing the right of United Nations staff to collective bargaining, a principle that the Organization had implicitly recognized in General Assembly resolution 128 (II) and which it promoted in the private sector by including it among the ten principles of the Global Compact. The budgetary crisis faced by the United Nations meant that it was more important than ever to involve staff in decisions that affected their conditions of service and to encourage them to be part of the solution.

36. Turning to the report on the management of sick leave in the United Nations system (A/67/337), he said that the Unit's goal had been to review the manner in which organizations recorded, managed and reported sick leave and propose improvements that would

enable them to clarify, improve and harmonize the rules and regulations pertaining to sick leave, prevent abuse and, more importantly, fulfil their duty of care with regard to the health and safety of staff.

37. With the decision of the CEB members to adopt an occupational safety and health policy for their respective organizations, and the corresponding paradigm shift whereby emphasis was placed on prevention rather than cure, organizations' occupational health services would be required to focus on the medical aspects relating to sick leave, including the compilation of relevant statistics. Medical services should not be managing sick leave; a medical professional should instead be assigned to human resources to monitor and approve sick leave requests.

38. The inspectors had found that, on average, staff at United Nations system organizations did not take as much sick leave as their counterparts in the public services of national Governments. However, it was not possible to state with certainty the cost of sick leave for organizations as the majority did not collect statistics on sick leave. Even among those organizations that collected such statistics, the data were not comparable owing to the different methodologies used. In addition, many organizations did not include indirect costs in their calculations.

39. A proactive sick leave policy would enable United Nations system organizations to fulfil their duty of care towards staff. According to one study, it was estimated that a one per cent increase in absenteeism was equivalent to a one per cent increase in salary costs. Such a finding underscored the need to enforce, through proper management, the existing rules and regulations on sick leave.

40. Under the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, which the United Nations system organizations had agreed to adopt in 2006, paid sick leave was assigned a financial value. However, the United Nations Task Force on Accounting Standards had not yet agreed on policy guidance for sick leave. It was recommended that managers and supervisors be formally trained on how to respond to the needs of staff members who had medical issues, including mental health issues, that might affect their performance and lead to prolonged absences. Accordingly, executive heads were requested to design and implement a return-to-work policy for staff members on extended sick leave.

41. Maintaining a healthy working environment was essential to reducing medical absenteeism. Organizations were therefore requested to consider incorporating health and productivity management modules into the workplace.

42. **The Chair** drew attention to the Secretary-General's notes transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on, respectively, the review of the Medical Service in the United Nations system (A/66/327/Add.1), staff-management relations within the United Nations (A/67/136/Add.1) and management of sick leave in the United Nations system (A/67/337/Add.1).

43. **Ms. Analena** (United Nations Staff Union) said that United Nations staff members, with the exception of those serving in New York, supported the Secretary-General's proposed framework for mobility and career development. The job network boards that would be created under the proposed framework would break the stranglehold hiring managers had on selection and reassignment, and ensure that staff were recognized for their skills, competencies and experience. The proposed framework would also increase the accountability of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and allow human resources management to take place at a more strategic level.

44. Staff should be represented in the job network boards, just as they were in other international organizations. The available data indicated that the inclusion of staff representatives reinforced staff members' confidence in the system, thereby reducing the risk of litigation, which was a source of concern for many delegations. A structured mobility system would also facilitate career planning, something that would not be possible under a system in which all positions were open to all staff members. However, in the interests of fairness, staff should not be expected to make at least one geographical move in order to be eligible to progress to positions at the P-5 level, particularly if external candidates were not subject to that requirement.

45. The Staff Union believed that the General Assembly should recognize the valuable outcome of the negotiations between the Secretary-General and staff. Failure to adopt the proposed framework would send the message to staff that the Secretary-General

lacked administrative authority and that those who negotiated on his behalf had no mandate.

46. With regard to staff-management relations, she said that the Staff Union fully supported the conclusions of the Joint Inspection Unit, particularly with regard to collective bargaining rights. She called on the General Assembly to adopt a resolution recognizing the right of United Nations staff to collective bargaining, as set out in Assembly resolution 128 (II) and the relevant International Labour Organization treaties.

47. Lastly, the Staff Union was of the view that the cost of staff legal services should be borne by the Organization. Under the current system of administration of justice, management could draw on the regular budget to pay for lawyers' fees, while staff were forced to rely on the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, which had limited resources at its disposal. If, however, Members States insisted that staff members should pay for their own legal representation, then the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal should be allowed to award the costs of such representation to those staff members who won their cases.

48. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the effective delivery of United Nations mandates hinged on the quality of its staff and the availability of resources. The Group therefore supported all reform measures aimed at ensuring that the Organization had a highly motivated, diverse and dynamic workforce.

49. The Group regretted that the Secretary-General had once again not responded to the General Assembly's request for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges. The lack of a response was particularly disturbing given that the original request had been made four years earlier. The Group reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance. It also stressed the need for greater representation of developing countries, particularly in senior management and at Headquarters, and was gravely concerned about the decrease in the proportion of staff from developing countries serving at the Professional level and above.

50. The proposed mobility and career development framework was complex and raised a number of questions. The Group looked forward to developing a better understanding of the proposal and its implications for the Organization, including with respect to how effective the system would be in achieving its stated goals; how it would contribute to more equitable geographical representation, especially at the senior level; its potential impact on existing recruitment and selection systems; the relative advantages and disadvantages of voluntary and mandatory mobility systems; the impact of the proposed mobility framework on job stability and contractual arrangements; the financial costs of mobility, including hidden and indirect costs; and how knowledge management practices would be strengthened to ensure retention of institutional knowledge.

51. Any mobility policy adopted by the General Assembly must avoid the problems that had plagued other transformational projects, including the absence of a clearly defined end-state vision, uncertain and spiralling costs, and lack of transparency and accountability. Regular reviews must also be conducted, in order to ensure that the framework was being implemented in a manner that was in line with the original objectives.

52. Transparency, particularly in staff selection, was of vital importance in relation to mobility. For instance, the discriminatory treatment of external candidates, which had been recently abolished by the General Assembly, must not be reintroduced. It was also important to ensure that management treated all staff members with the utmost dignity and transparency, while fully respecting the terms of contracts.

53. Although a mobility policy could not be implemented overnight, it was possible to rapidly put in place certain measures that would encourage mobility and set the stage for broader reforms in the future, such as the abolition of the practice of placing a lien against a post. Mobility was not an end in itself; it must be linked to the Organization's strategic objectives. It was also not the only important area of human resources management that needed to be addressed. Equal or even greater attention must be devoted to, inter alia, long-term workforce planning, responsiveness in staff selection and recruitment, and equitable geographical representation and gender balance.

54. **Ms. Pakarati** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC understood that delivering on the mandates entrusted to the United Nations around the world required a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce. It that connection, she stressed the importance of the dialogue the Secretary-General had conducted with staff representatives with a view to finding a balance between the needs of the Organization and the legitimate expectations of its employees.

55. She noted with concern that, despite the Secretary-General's efforts, equitable geographical distribution, particularly at the senior level, had not been achieved. The Secretary-General was urged to intensify his efforts to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance of staff, as mandated by the General Assembly. In that connection, CELAC was deeply concerned that the Secretary-General had once again failed to respond to the request of the General Assembly to present proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges.

56. CELAC supported the concept of staff mobility, as that would help the Organization to deliver its mandates and allow staff to benefit systematically from the opportunities that mobility afforded. However, it was very difficult to visualize fully the impact of the proposed mobility framework on the Organization's ability to fulfil its mandates. CELAC would therefore seek further information on several aspects of the Secretary-General's proposal, including its potential impact on equitable geographical distribution and its financial implications.

57. **Mr. Hagmann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that a more systematic approach to promoting increased mobility would allow the Organization to better respond to changes in staffing needs and deliver on its mandates. A mobility framework should ensure equal opportunity for all staff members and help to break down the silos that tended to characterize the Organization's working culture.

58. The Secretary-General's proposal for a mobility and career development framework contained a number of interesting elements; however, the proposal was not sufficiently detailed and many aspects, both quantitative and qualitative, needed to be clarified or refined further. Questions remained regarding the incentives that could be used to encourage not only functional but also geographical mobility; how to strengthen the link between geographical mobility and career development; the financial implications; the anticipated return on investment; and how the framework could be integrated with the various talent management reforms already under way, including in relation to workforce planning.

59. The delegations believed that the General Assembly could approve some of the principles pertaining to the modalities of the mobility framework, in order to give the Secretary-General some guidance, and endorse, in principle, implementation of the framework on 1 January 2015, subject to the resolution of the issues identified by the Advisory Committee.

60. **Mr. Stojanovski** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the three delegations supported increased mobility within the Organization. Mobility allowed staff to benefit from new experiences and gain fresh insights, and helped improve morale and performance. A mobility framework would also enable the Organization to make better use of human and financial resources by, inter alia, filling positions at duty stations with high vacancy rates and promoting a more equitable sharing of the burden of service in difficult duty stations. Given that the United Nations most salient and recognizable work was in the field, it was important that, in addition to broad professional expertise and skills, which could be developed in different duty stations and field offices, all staff members had experience in the field and a good understanding of field operations.

61. The proposed framework was a good basis for building an effective mobility policy, especially as it had been endorsed by the majority of the staff unions. While they recognized that the proposal was intentionally broad and that the details still had to be worked out, the three delegations would nonetheless welcome more information on how the policy would be implemented. For example, they wished to know what would be the role of staff representatives on the job network boards; what administrative remedies would be available to staff members who disagreed with the boards' decisions; what effect the framework would have on applications from external candidates; and what were the estimated future costs of the policy.

62. **Ms. Power** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the acceding country

Croatia; the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein and the Republic of Moldova, said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals on managed mobility and the progress made towards consolidating past reforms and creating a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce. Nonetheless, some basic human resources management challenges needed to be addressed. In particular, her delegation was concerned that the Organization was not moving rapidly enough in granting continuing contracts. Despite the efforts made to improve performance management through such initiatives as the rewards and recognition framework, more needed to be done to tackle underperformance and to encourage staff and managers to adopt the new approaches aimed at improving performance. Similarly, her delegation remained concerned about the amount of time taken to recruit staff and the ongoing gender imbalance within the Secretariat. She trusted that the latter would be addressed in the Secretary-General's comprehensive strategy to attract and retain women.

63. The European Union supported the Secretary-General's proposed framework for mobility and career development. A better managed mobility programme had the potential to contribute to the delivery of mandates and to respond better to staff members' career aspirations. However, any mobility programme should take into account budgetary constraints and existing mobility patterns. She echoed the Advisory Committee's call for further details on the financial implications of the proposed framework and its impact on externally recruited candidates, as well as on the role of staff representatives in the decision-making structures, which seemed to allow for an inappropriate level of staff involvement. In that connection, workforce planning should be used to provide a thorough evaluation of staffing needs, rather than focusing strictly on retirement forecasting.

64. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand) said that, while his delegation appreciated the progress made by the Secretariat with regard to human resources management reform, steps should be taken to enhance recruitment and staff selection procedures further, in order to ensure transparency and accountability and to address the high vacancy rates at many duty stations. Greater efforts should also be made to ensure gender parity and to promote the advancement of women, especially to senior positions.

65. He welcomed the initiatives to promote greater mobility among the United Nations workforce and expressed the hope that current and future initiatives would help the Organization to realize the potential benefits of mobility. There were some 30 United Nations offices in Thailand that would benefit directly and indirectly from the mobility framework. However, for the policy to be truly successful, it should be implemented in manner and at a pace that was acceptable to all parties. A cost-benefit analysis should also be carried out, in order to ensure that the proposed framework would not create a heavy financial burden for the Organization.

66. **Mr. Sul** Kyung-hoon (Republic of Korea) said that, while progress had been made towards streamlining contractual arrangements and harmonizing service conditions, much remained to be done before the human resources reform process was complete. Using new technology and software, such as Inspira, to improve forecasting of staffing requirements would not only help the United Nations implement its mandates, but also further staff members' career development. Despite having allocated some $89 million for the biennium 2012-2013, the Organization still lacked monitoring and oversight systems to evaluate the results of training; the enterprise learning management module of Inspira should be used to promote the direct link between learning and career development. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the effective integration of Inspira and Umoja was key to the development of an efficient, responsive and comprehensive system for the management of the Organization's human resources, particularly in the critical area of workforce planning. His delegation also shared the concerns of the Advisory Committee that the lack of information on the impact of the human resources management reform efforts could delay the decision-making process and thereby hinder those efforts.

67. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the performance appraisal system and would appreciate further information on the rewards and recognition framework that had been developed. However, it was concerned that the lack of sanctions for underperformance would have a negative impact on staff morale and productivity, and urged the Secretariat to take more proactive measures to address

shortcomings in that regard. Noting that the recruitment process of the young professionals programme had been shortened by two months for those candidates who had succeeded in the recruitment examination, he said his delegation would seek to learn whether the programme had helped to alleviate inequitable geographical representation within the Secretariat.

68. With regard to mobility, he said that, despite the failure of the voluntary mobility scheme, both Member States and staff recognized its importance. The Secretary-General's proposal should be reviewed carefully and he should provide further details with regard to its scope and how the burden of service in difficult duty stations would be shared. The minimum occupancy limit of one year was not long enough to allow staff to reach their full potential. His delegation also shared the concerns of the Advisory Committee with regard to the composition of the job network boards and the impact of the proposed framework on external applicants. The Secretariat should also provide detailed estimates of the direct and indirect costs of the scheme.

69. **Mr. Al-Yaqout** (Kuwait) said that, in his report on the composition of the Secretariat and staff demographics, the Secretary-General indicated that a number of Member States, including Kuwait, were unrepresented. Although his Government had nominated several qualified candidates to fill vacant posts, none of them had been appointed. Additional measures should therefore be taken in order to increase the employment opportunities available to the nationals of unrepresented countries.

70. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said that such goals as the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity were frequently mentioned when discussing human resources management. There were, however, other important goals, such as equitable geographical distribution and gender balance in the Secretariat, that were far from being achieved. In that connection, his delegation supported the recommendations set out in paragraphs 49 and 54 of the Advisory Committee's report on human resources management (A/67/545). It also reiterated the requests made by the General Assembly in its resolutions 63/250 and 65/247 that the Secretary-General should submit concrete proposals to improve geographical representation.

71. The Secretary-General's proposed mobility framework raised a number of concerns. His delegation would therefore welcome more detailed information on the financial and budgetary implications of the Secretary-General's proposal. The proposed framework also raised the question of whether mobility should be voluntary or mandatory. His delegation was of the view that the Secretariat should focus its efforts on developing a voluntary mobility policy, as called for by General Assembly in its resolution 63/250. Lastly, his delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that the proposed mobility framework should not serve as yet another obstacle to geographical diversity and gender parity in the Secretariat.

72. **Ms. Yajima** (Japan) said that, although her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposed mobility framework, it shared the Advisory Committee's concerns regarding the potential effect of the current proposal on external recruitment and, by extension, on merit-based selection, geographical representation and gender balance. It was vitally important that the Organization should be able to recruit new talent from around the world in order to create a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce. She therefore trusted that the Secretary-General would submit a detailed accounting of the full costs of the proposed framework, to supplement the indicative costs provided in his report. Her delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee on the importance of a robust monitoring mechanism to track the actual costs of the framework.

73. In order to improve human resources management and staff productivity, a balance had to be struck between sanctions and rewards for performance. Her delegation was therefore concerned about the shortcomings of the current system of sanctions for underperformance and requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to address those shortcomings and report on results achieved in his next report on human resources management. Speeding up the recruitment process was an important aspect of ensuring timely and flexible human resources management. Her delegation therefore appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to streamline the young professionals programme and trusted that rostered candidates would be recruited promptly. Lastly, as an underrepresented country, Japan echoed the Advisory Committee's call for the Secretary-General to develop

a comprehensive strategy to improve geographical representation.

74. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that, although his delegation supported the overarching goal of the reform of human resources management, much work remained to be done with regard to achieving equitable geographical distribution. Despite the benefits that had resulted from recent reforms, it was widely agreed that human resources management at the United Nations continued to suffer from fundamental deficiencies, including, inter alia, a flawed, inadequate and time-consuming recruitment and selection system that lacked transparency and failed to address the Organization's current and future needs; inadequate strategic and workforce planning; underrepresentation of a large number of developing countries at the Professional and senior levels; lack of opportunity for career development, particularly for staff from developing countries; lack of incentives for geographical mobility; the absence of a well-defined accountability framework and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of General Assembly resolutions and the attainment of the targets identified in the human resource scorecards for senior managers; inadequate information technology support for human resources management; and a lack of clarity regarding the improvements that Umoja would bring.

75. The world had changed since 1960, when the system of desirable ranges had been established in order to measure progress towards equitable geographical distribution. While there had been reforms in many other areas of human resources management, it was hard to believe that the system of desirable ranges, which was one of the most important elements of human resources management, had remained unchanged. The General Assembly had provided the Secretary-General with the clear guidance he needed to present proposals for a comprehensive review of the system. While the introduction of changes to the system was a complex issue, it was by no means an impossible task. In fact, the Organization had successfully addressed much more complex problems, such change management and other major business transformation projects.

76. His delegation was concerned that of the 33,971 persons who had applied to the young professionals programme, only 96 had succeeded in the 2011 recruitment examination. In that connection, it would welcome information on any decrease in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented countries subsequent to that examination.

77. The Secretary-General's proposed framework for mobility and career development was a testament to his commitment to transforming the United Nations into a field-oriented Organization, in conformity with the purposes and principles of its Charter. In that connection, his delegation supported all measures aimed at ensuring equitable sharing of the burden of service in difficult duty stations.

78. Despite its merits, there were several deficiencies in the Secretary-General's proposal, including a lack of sufficient details to justify a shift from voluntary to managed mobility; a lack of reliable data on current patterns of staff mobility; inadequate explanation of how the proposed mobility policy would provide opportunities for staff in the Field Service category to serve at Headquarters duty stations; and a lack of information on the impact of the proposed framework on the current staff selection system. The proposal also failed to address the treatment of external candidates, advertisement of positions, geographical representation and gender balance, nor did it provide a detailed accounting of the full costs of the mobility framework or clear performance indicators.

79. The proposed mobility framework should not result in multiple recruitment processes with every geographical or functional move. Given that the selection and recruitment process was already slow and time-consuming, the introduction of additional screening processes with every move would unnecessarily delay filling positions, increase vacancy rates and have financial implications.

80. The first steps that must be taken in the implementation of any mobility policy were to ensure a more equitable sharing of burden of service in hardship duty stations, abolish the practice of placing a lien against a post and give priority to candidates who had served in hardship duty stations for long periods.

81. His delegation supported the continuation of the existing eligibility criteria for recruitment and selection, including relevant qualifications, experience and skills, as well as gender and geographical benchmarks. It would not accept a mobility policy that reintroduced discriminatory treatment of external candidates because that would have an adverse effect on merit-based selection, geographical representation and gender balance in the Organization.

82. **Mr. Lieberman** (United States of America) said that his delegation fully supported the goals of the Secretary-General's mobility policy and agreed that the proposed framework could be an effective tool in achieving those goals. However, the Advisory Committee had found that key elements of the policy were not well defined. The Committee should therefore examine the issues that had been raised by the Advisory Committee, in particular the financial implications of mobility and its impact on recruiting external candidates, in order to further develop the policy. An effective mobility policy should be part of a broader package of management and human resources reforms, including a performance management system that effectively promoted and rewarded high performance and removed the small number of staff who failed to meet performance standards.

83. He remained concerned about perennial challenges to staff-management relations. Although it was crucial that the Secretary-General consult with staff on matters related to human resources management policies and staff welfare, management decisions were ultimately the responsibility of managers, subject to the oversight and authority of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General's actions and proposals were therefore expected to reflect what he considered to be the best interests of the Organization. Given that effective management decision-making within the Organization was already hampered by diffuse authority and political pressure from all directions, his delegation could not support a framework that diluted managers' authority further and weakened accountability for their decisions. Although ongoing and sincere consultations between senior managers and staff representatives were vital, it was in the interests of the United Nations and its staff to ensure that there was no ambiguity with regard to the accountability of the chief administrative officer or the authority of the Member States.

84. **Mr. Ang** (Singapore) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the Organization's outmoded human resources polices and to create a better work environment for staff members. Workforce planning and monitoring functions should be strengthened within the United Nations in order to ensure the optimal deployment of its limited resources. Although efforts had been made to develop a coherent succession planning policy, a more holistic strategy was required. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that more could be done to forecast staffing requirements for the major occupational groups. That observation took on greater relevance in view of the Secretary-General's proposed mobility framework; the successful implementation of any mobility policy would be largely contingent on improved forecasting of future staffing requirements, as decisions about where staff would be best placed to serve the Organization could only be made if needs were clearly defined.

85. Although some measures had been taken to ensure more equitable geographical distribution in the Secretariat, they did not address the root of the problem. It was therefore regrettable that the Secretary-General had again failed to submit proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges. The Secretary-General should submit such proposals as soon as possible and step up his efforts to achieve greater gender balance in the Secretariat, particularly at the senior levels. Lastly, while his delegation supported the principle of mobility, it believed that the Secretary-General's proposal was not sufficiently detailed in many important aspects, including the list of rotational and non-rotational positions, the configuration of the job networks and cost implications. It was also unclear whether the proposed framework would resolve issues such as equitable sharing of the burden of service in difficult duty stations. The Secretary-General should therefore review his proposal, as implementing an incomplete policy prematurely could lead to serious staffing problems.

86. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that human resources management policies were key to the reform of United Nations governance. Proposals in that regard should be aimed at improving the effectiveness of the staffing policy, meeting the Organization's needs for qualified staff and ensuring the successful and efficient functioning of the Secretariat, all within the financial means of Member States. His delegation would therefore consider carefully the Secretary-General's proposals in the context of prior General Assembly resolutions on staffing reform. Although Member States had expended a great deal of effort in order to reach an agreement on staffing policy reforms, those reforms had had insufficient quantitative impact on hiring. A more detailed analysis of the impact of reforms on staff productivity was also needed.

87. With regard to mobility, his delegation agreed that staff training should be improved and the burdens shared fairly between staff at Headquarters and those in the field. Nevertheless, it was important to reach agreement on a model that would not result in chaos; the continuous movement of staff was not an end in and of itself. The various proposals for developing mobility should be studied thoroughly with a view to determining whether staff would be able to adapt to different roles or duty stations, and whether they would be able to effectively carry out their duties. Recalling that the Secretary-General's prior proposals on mobility had either been rejected by Member States or had failed to achieve their goals, he said that the Committee had a duty to avoid making the same mistake. Moreover, the Secretary-General had not submitted proposals aimed at encouraging the voluntary mobility of staff, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/250.

88. Similarly, related staffing policy priorities should also be borne in mind. His delegation was concerned that the mobility policy could affect equality between internal and external candidates for vacancies. The Secretary-General's proposal raised many questions, including, whether the Organization wanted to strengthen the concept of a United Nations career employee, what was the difference between a career and a temporary employee, how could the Organization ensure the most appropriate performance review mechanism, what would happen to underperformers, how could line managers take responsibility for the work of their units when staffing decisions were made by reassignment boards, how could the internal justice system be spared a flood of applications from staff concerning mobility decisions they considered to be unfair, and what were the financial implications. It had taken three years to develop proposals and to reach an agreement between the Secretary-General and staff. Given the many concerns and questions raised by Member States, his delegation doubted that the Secretary-General would be able to resolve all matters prior to the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

89. Although the Secretary-General's efforts to increase the representation of women and ensure wider geographical representation were welcome, they should not overshadow the key priority set out in the Charter of selecting the most qualified candidates. As staff were categorized on the basis of contractual status, it was justifiable to make distinctions between their selection requirements. Those distinctions should be taken into consideration when examining all the possible alternative systems for calculating geographical quotas.

90. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka) said that his delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's efforts to improve human resources management because it believed that any measure aimed at making the Organization more effective and efficient was to the benefit of all Member States. In that connection, he noted that mobility should be view as a human resource management tool that could improve the functioning of the United Nations while serving the interests of its staff. The proposed mobility framework should take into account all relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and ensure adequate geographical representation and gender equality at all levels in the Organization. His delegation was of the view that mobility would help to reduce the prevailing high vacancy rates, particularly in difficult duty stations. However, it was concerned about the distribution of vacancies among internal and external candidates; while it was important to bring in fresh blood and ideas, existing staff members should be treated with respect and dignity.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.